



The Marianists

FATHER JOHN A. LEIES

75 years of profession

I grew up in St. Michael's Parish on the Near North Side of Chicago. My parents were of German and German-Swiss descent — hard-working Catholics. Two younger sisters and a younger brother completed the family.

I attended St. Michael's grade school and high school. Although two of my uncles — Bro. Herbert Leies and Fr. John G. Leies — were Marianists, I rarely had the occasion to see them. However, my contact with Marianists at St. Michael's High School was daily. I came to admire them and desired to follow their way of life. Some of those who I admired were Bro. Ed Goerdt, Bro. Gene Feld and Bro. Ed Dunne. In 1943, I entered the novitiate of the Society of Mary in Galesville, Wisconsin.

I made first vows in 1944. My life as a Marianist unfolded quickly: a year at Maryhurst Normal (St. Louis), completion of university studies at University of Dayton (1947), an appointment to teach at Don Bosco High School (Milwaukee, 1948-1952), assignment to the Marianist Seminary in Fribourg (Switzerland, 1952-1958), ordination (1956).

After returning to the United States, I was appointed chaplain and teacher at Don Bosco High School and then provincial assistant for religious life of the Province of St. Louis, followed by designation as Superior of the Region of Peru. After that, there was an appointment as chaplain and teacher at Chaminade High School (St. Louis, 1968-1974). Since 1974, I have been at St. Mary's University in San Antonio as president for three years, as academic vice-president for three years, chair of the theology department and chaplain/teacher for the other years.

I believe that a religious vocation is always first and foremost a work of grace, a calling from God. I thank the Lord and His mother for the graces of these past years, 63 of which I have served as a Marianist priest.

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